

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**October 28, 2008**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on October 28, 2008 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini and Commissioners Jeff Hirsh, Dave Duffy and Paul MacDonald.**

**Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Martha Sheridan and Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Deb Tuton, Arlene Oliva and Amanda Marzullo RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Lisa Coelho, Kym Chevian, Jodi Duclos and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Steve Hahl, VMA; Jayne Panarello, Rhode Island Tourism Division; Evan Smith and Len Penagio, Newport CVB; Jerry Freed, Delaware North/Sportservice; Tom Crocker and John Velez, Sportservice; Patrick Benasillo, VGS; Bob Bromely, Senate Fiscal Office and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM. Ms. Venturini thanked everyone for attending asked that they introduce themselves.**

**Noting that the minutes of the September meeting had been**

**distributed, Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to approve. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the September meeting.**

**Ms. Venturini began the meeting by saying that after discussion with Mr. Duffy and Mr. McCarvill there will be new reporting requirements from our marketing teams. Ms. Venturini stated that the Committee would like to see a layout of goals and the direction that the team is taking to reach those goals. Mr. Duffy said that he would like to see a tracking to the Marketing Plans that were presented last month. Ms. Venturini stated that everyone is working harder to stay profitable.**

## **PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB**

**Ms. Sheridan reported that the CVB has had staff realignment and has reassigned a member who will spend 50% of the time on research into the direction that the CVB should take to attract groups and events. Ms. Sheridan noted that the CVB included goals in their Marketing Plan and would include them in next months report. Mr. Schriever began the CVB's Power Point Presentation. He was pleased to report that 78% of the CVB's bookings are Convention Center related. He also noted that larger conferences are being booked because of additional hotel rooms. Mr. Schriever reported that sales activity for the month of September produced fourteen**

definite and forty-two tentative bookings for the City. Mr. Schriever stated that of the fourteen definite bookings four events would be held at the Convention Center, Jamfest, Bay Colony Cluster Dog Show, American Specialty Toy Retailing Association and the World Triathlon Corporation. Mr. Schriever stated that the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association, the New England Water Environment Association, the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors and the American Meteorological Society were here to participate in site inspections. Mr. Schriever noted that the sales team had made sales calls in Boston, New York City and Washing, DC, attended trade shows and hosted a Legally Blonde client event at PPAC. Mr. Duffy asked the progress of the NCAA Tournament event. Mr. Schriever said that the CVB is working with Providence College on the pre-promotion of the tournament. Mr. Schriever said that all in all we have had some success. Ms. Sheridan noted that our relationship with Brown University as well as the ambassador program has been a successful source for leads. Mr. MacDonald offered his assistance in attracting union business to the facilities. He noted that the Convention Center and the Dunkin' Donuts Center are staffed by union members. Mr. MacDonald stated that our facilities are not large enough for national gatherings but regional meetings would be a perfect fit. Mr. Duffy suggested that the CVB establish contacts with Brown Medical School and Ms. Sheridan stated that they had done so.

Mrs. Cohen reported on upcoming events at the Dunkin' Donuts

Center. She stated that the Providence Bruins continue promotions to increase attendance at their games. Mrs. Cohen noted that there are youth hockey games prior to and between periods of the Bruin's game as well as chorus groups singing the National Anthem. She stated that parents, grandparents and other family members are here to give their support and they purchase tickets for the game. Mrs. Cohen said that the P Bruins also sponsor two for one games and special give away nights to attract more fans. Mrs. Cohen noted that the Providence College banners will be installed this week prior to the start their season. Mrs. Cohen highlighted other upcoming events. She said that So You Think You Can Dance and New Kids on the Block are selling well but will not sell out. Mrs. Cohen noted that the Boxing event is not doing well and is scheduled on a Thursday night when the Patriots are playing. Mrs. Cohen said that she is optimistic that the Holiday Hot Night will draw a large crowd. Mrs. Cohen had produced a schedule indicating the venues that have the same events as the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the corresponding ticket sales. She noted that the Dunk is doing as well or better than most. Mrs. Cohen's presentation included examples of how the Dunkin' Donuts Center is using electronic advertising to promote events on radio station web sites. Mrs. Cohen also noted the use of text messaging during a performance that can be utilized to gather information for our data base.

Mr. McGinn reported on tentative events. He stated that GTECH continues to be a good source of business and they are planning an

all employee meeting in January 2009. Mr. McGinn stated that Cambridge Health Tech Institute is looking for space for their Fall meeting and the New England Railroad Club is interested in bringing their tradeshow back to the Convention Center in March, 2010. Mr. McGinn noted that our ambassador, Josh Miller, is helping to secure The Council of State Governments for a meeting in November 2010. Mr. McGinn reported that contracted events include the American College of Healthcare Administrators, Wire Association International and the Story Book Ball. Mr. McGinn reported that the staff is working to obtain a new public show for the Convention Center. He said that they have met with Mark Gasbarro to obtain a wine show for the Fall of 2009. Mr. McGinn reported on the sales blitz initiatives that were discussed last month. He noted that a sales trip is planned for Thursday, November 13th to the 128 Belt Corridor that will target, Reebok, TJX, Lowe's, Math Works, Conference Hotels Unlimited and Staples. Mr. McGinn stated that the CVB will join the Convention Center staff for the sales blitz. Mr. McGinn reported the use of Hotel-Intell.com as a resource for meetings and trade shows. Mr. McGinn stated that in an effort to increase pharmaceutical business legal council is looking over a contract that is required prior to doing business with Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb. Mr. McGinn reported that sales kits have gone out to local high schools, colleges and universities advertising our facility for proms, balls and other social events. Ms. Venturini stated that she has been working with the State Police and looking into activities for high school kids to participate in post prom. She wondered if a pajama party or

something could be arranged to keep the kids safe. Mrs. Cohen noted that the radio shows might get involved. Mr. Duffy asked Mr. McCarvill to update the Committee on the status of the Fan Fest. Mr. McCarvill said that we are still holding the date for the Fan Fest but Providence College has a conflict because they are hosting a tournament at the same time. Mr. McCarvill said that we are trying to arrange our Fan Fest in association with the PC Tournament. Mr. McGinn said that as long as Providence College is willing to take some ownership of the event it will work out well. Mrs. Cohen asked if it would be advertised as its own event. Mr. MacDonald said that the Boys & Girls Club had signed the contract for a golf show. Mr. McGinn noted that a major manufacturer of golf equipment is bringing in a golf show that is being sponsored by the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. MacDonald noted that the club needs the exposure and would be valuable in event promotion.

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. Habl to report on progress at the VMA. Mr. Habl reported that the original VMA Logo did not reflect the elegance or mission of the venue. Mr. Habl said that by changing the color scheme a new logo was created for very little cost that picks up the venue's interior color scheme. Mr. Habl said that the new slogan "It's a New Day at the VMA" is being used in advertising that will be inserted into "Center Stage" a publication sent to approximately 300,000 PPAC subscribers. The VMA is also being advertised in the Providence Journal and Destination Providence. A new banner is being proposed for over the main entrance front doors and the ticket

envelope has been redesigned and includes advertising for the Temple Restaurant. Mr. Hahl reported that the Renaissance Hotel and the VMA staff are working on a mailing envelope to include both logos. Mr. Hahl said that it will take time to change the image of the theater. He noted that there are no signs indicating what the building is. He said that he would open the doors to anyone interested in visiting the theater. Mr. Hahl reported that Bruce Bruce will not be appearing because of the low number of tickets sold. Mr. Hahl noted that A Kristallnacht Concert was doing well and that the Rhode Island Philharmonic will be playing on November 15th. Mr. Duffy stated that the conductor had informed him that this was the first time that he felt welcome in the building.

Ms. Venturini noted that Dave DePetrillo had retired from the Tourism Division and that Jayne Panarello was with us to represent that organization. Ms. Panarello said that in the future Mark Brodner would be attending the meetings in the future. Ms. Panarello reported that that there will be new initiatives under Mr. Brodner's leadership. Ms. Panarello said that there are only three people in the Tourism Division right now and that she would be working on the international side. Mr. Duffy said that the budget for tourism is not large enough but in these economic times it doesn't appear that an increase is likely.

Len Penagio of the Newport CVB reported that the Summer was good in Newport. He said that there were more people but they were

spending less money. Mr. Penagio noted that there were a great many international guests. Mr. MacDonald asked how the valet parking initiative worked. Mr. Smith said that it was a good experience but the plan needs some tweaking,

Ms. Venturini said that branding will be discussed at the November meeting. Ms. Venturini asked if there were any other business. Hearing none she sought a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to adjourn at 2:10 pm